GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:407
ANSWERED ON:24.08.2005
AMENDMENTS IN THE TELEGRAPH ACT
Rao Shri Sambasiva Rayapati;Saradgi Shri Iqbal Ahmed

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has taken a decision to make amendments in the Telegraph Act in order to incorporate a clause which will help cellular service providers to get a share from the Universal Service Obligation (USO) fund to connect rural India, highways and rail networks;

(b) if so, the details in this regard;

(c) whether this matter has been discussed with the USO fund administrator;

(d) if so, the outcome of the said discussions;

(e) the extent to which it is likely to help mobile firms to enter into rural areas;

(f) the other steps under the consideration of the Government to assist mobile firms to enter into rural areas; and

(g) the rural areas likely to be brought under mobile connectivity during 2006-07, State-wise?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD)

(a) to (g): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT TO BE LAID ON THE TABLE OF THE LOK SABHA IN RESPECT OF PARTS (a) TO (g) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 407 FOR 24TH AUGUST, 2005 REGARDING AMENDMENTS IN THE TELEGRAPH ACT.

(a) to (g) An amendment in the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885 to provide support for Cellular Services from Universal Service Obligation Fund for faster expansion of telecommunication services in rural and remote areas in under active consideration of the Government. Administrator USO Fund has also recommended such a measure.

At present, various Access Service Licensees in their service area are free to participate in competitive bidding process by Administrator, Universal Service Obligation Fund, to provide rural fixed telephones on wireline or wireless system.

Unified Access Service Licence and Cellular Mobile Telephone Service Licences stipulate roll out obligations as coverage of 50% district headquarters or any towns in lieu thereof within three years of effective date of licence. Expansion of mobile services in rural areas is as per the business plans of the various licensees.